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"Talking Frankly" about David Irving

A Critical Analysis of David Irving's Statement on the Holocaust

By Hadding Scott

Published: 2016-05-24

The Operation Reinhardt Camps (1:39:42 – 1:52:20)

> *"So, is David Irving a Holocaust Denier? I don't think so...."* (1:39:42 – 1:39:47)

Irving says that he is not a Holocaust Denier because he now asserts that millions of Jews were killed in the Operation Reinhardt camps.

Early in his discussion of those camps, Irving makes a bizarre assertion about Holocaust Revisionists:

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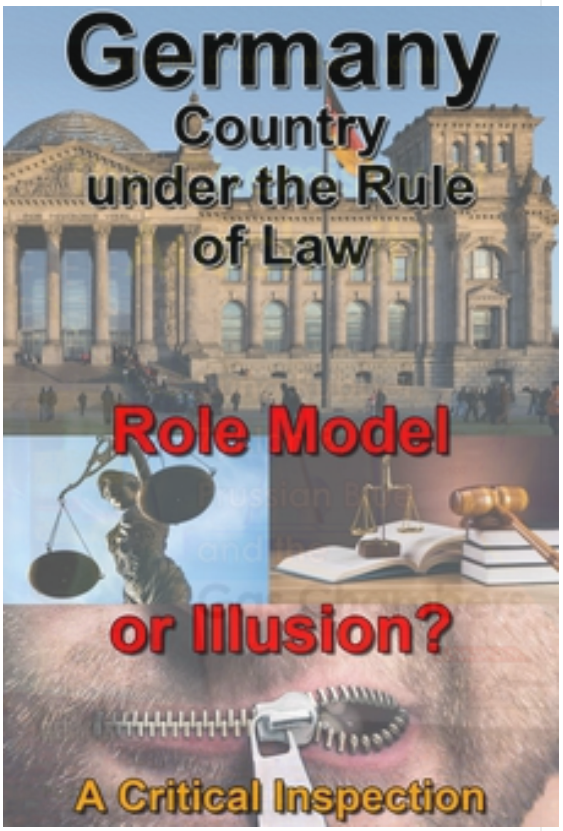

Germany, Country under the Rule of Law: Role Model or Illusion?

Germany enjoys the reputation of being a liberal, democratic country under the rule of law. The reality, however, is quite different, because when push comes to shove, the German judiciary can do whatever they want. And that's exactly what

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> *"And here is where I say I have to cross swords with the main Revisionist body. They don't want to believe the Reinhardt camps exist. I think the Reinhardt camps did exist."* (1:40:46 – 1:40:57)

This was an astonishing statement. There is no Holocaust Revisionist who says that the Operation Reinhardt camps never existed. On 5 April 2016 I asked David Irving which revisionist claims that these camps never existed, and he was kind and humble enough to respond:

> *"I don't know."*

The motive for saying that "the main Revisionist body" denies that the Reinhardt camps existed is obviously to create distance between himself and those awful Holocaust Deniers, but Irving has blatantly overstepped the bounds of truth here (although an audience of university-students might not suspect it). The statement could be used as evidence that David Irving is really not, as he likes to declare, careful about what he says, but one will see that there is no shortage of evidence for that.

Irving introduces the Operation Reinhardt camps this way:

> *"It was a thieving operation, a looting operation, The Jews were being sent to these camps, and before they were being liquidated, they were being robbed of everything they had. It was a plundering operation."* (1:40:35 –

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> 1:40:46)

The claim that Jews arriving at the Reinhardt camps were stripped of valuables may be true. But the claim that this confiscation was accompanied by mass-murder ("liquidation") of Jews is sheer speculation.

Irving does not give any information about how the killing in these camps is supposed to have been done. Much less does Irving cite any witness, most likely because the alleged eyewitnesses to mass-murder in the Operation Reinhardt camps, from Abraham Bomba to Yankiel Wiernik, have all been scrutinized and notoriously lack credibility. Irving therefore entirely avoids citing any of those alleged witnesses.

Instead, Irving constructs an accusation of mass-murder totally apart from what the discredited "witnesses" ever said, based on cherry-picked tidbits from documents. On top of that, he also misrepresents some things. But ultimately even this is not enough, and he must rely on invocations of imagination to compensate for the shortfall in evidence. To put it briefly, this is not serious history, much less "real history." It is very much like the war-propaganda that David Irving used to reject.

Look at how Irving encourages his listeners to fill in their knowledge-gaps by guessing what a document means:

> *"Now, the Hoefle document of course is very significant. You don't have to be a rocket-scientist to guess that T, S, and B, are Treblinka, Sobibor, and Belzec, three of these camps.*
>
> *You don't have to be a rocket-scientist to guess what is happening to them in those camps. They are not being processed through them; they are being dealt with in them."* (1:46:12 – 1:46:30)

Look at the rhetoric. First, Irving imparts a modicum of respectability to the act of guessing. It is, after all, obvious enough what "T, S, and B" represent. But then Irving asks his audience to "guess" that Jews were mass-murdered. This is an appeal to vain presumption.

If Irving's evidence were any good, he would not be telling his listeners to "guess" what is happening in the camps.

Based on the *surmise* that Jews being deprived of valuables were also murdered, Irving puts the Jewish death-toll for the Operation Reinhardt camps for 1942 and 1943 at "2.2 million people or more." (1:46:54 – 1:47:02)

There are eight or nine documents to which Irving refers in his discussion of the Operation Reinhardt camps:

1. an alleged letter from Heinrich Himmler ordering the demolition of Treblinka and the establishment of a farm on the site (putatively to disguise

what had been happening there);

2. Himmler’s letter to Heinrich Müller about “Jews dying like flies”;
3. Himmler’s letter to Ernst-Robert Grawitz about the low rate of cancer-mortality in the camps;
4. two inventories of confiscated valuables from 1942 and 1943;
5. the Hoefle telegram;
6. the Korherr Report;
7. a letter from Himmler to Korherr instructing him on how to word the executive summary of the Korherr Report for Hitler;
8. alleged memoirs of Adolf Eichmann.

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